

# Vijana Tunaweza! *Yes Youth Can!*



*Yes Youth Can!*

**YES Youth Can! (YYC)** is a nationwide program designed to empower Kenyan youth to improve their lives and communities. The program aims to enable youth to achieve a greater voice in national policy and create new livelihood opportunities.

## **Yes Youth Can! background**

Yes Youth Can! was developed based on significant research conducted after the post-election violence. The research showed that youth had little confidence in all institutions intermediating resources on their behalf. This included public sector institutions, private sector business, and civil society organizations. Youth also expressed the desire to have their own voice in affairs that affect them, through youth-run organizations.

## **Yes Youth Can! in progress**

USAID has been supporting youth to build new, more representative networks to encourage collaboration among youth and leverage resources. Youth from thousands of villages are *Youth Bunge* (Youth Parliament) members. Youth prefer the “Bunge” name because it demonstrates they have a truly democratic space for dialogue and deliberation of their own. So far, over 5000 *Youth Bunges* have formed and registered as self-help groups with the Ministry of Gender & Social Development. Some 15,000 are expected to form by mid-2012.

As genuinely, youth-owned, youth-led, and youth-managed, the Bunges allow young women and men to develop new leadership skills, promote transparent decision-making about their priorities, engage their collective voice on decisions that affect them and revive the true spirit of *harambee* as they volunteer and serve in developing their communities.

## **Youth Bunges:**

- *Engage* all youth, ages 18-35, in a geographic area or village.
- *Partner* with YYC implementing partners – to improve the enabling environment for youth enterprises and build new skills in youth leadership and entrepreneurship.
- *Empower* youth to directly elect their own *Bunge* leaders – at village, county and national levels - and build an agenda for action in their communities.
- *Mobilize* community resources and leverage assets to build new partnerships with donors and government agencies.
- Organize County Bunge Forums that bring together village *Youth Bunges* to address county-wide and national issues.

### **Youth Facts in Kenya:**

- Kenya defines youth as 18-35 years old
- 36% (11 million) of Kenya's population are youth
- 45% of Nairobi's population are youth
- One-third of all HIV/AIDS patients are youth and 75% of new infections occur among youth
- Over 80% of Kenyan youth are literate
- nearly 2.5 million youth are unemployed and barely 125,000 are absorbed annually into formal employment



*Kwale County Bunge Forum*



*Community Clean-up leading to garbage collection business*

#### Contact Information

Erna Kerst  
Mission  
Director

USAID/Kenya  
P.O. Box 629  
00621, Nairobi  
Kenya: Tel: 254-20-862-2000

For more information:  
Contact USAID/Kenya's Yes  
Youth Can! team at  
[yesyouthcan@usaid.gov](mailto:yesyouthcan@usaid.gov)

- Ensure gender-equitable representation and reflect the ethnic diversity and minorities including those with disabilities.

#### Yes Youth Can! Planned Activities

- YYC will constitute a **Kenya Youth Think Tank** to conduct and develop youth friendly policies that relate directly to the youth and their communities.
- In 2012, YYC will formally launch a youth led and you managed **Youth Innovate for Change (Tahidi) Fund** to support grassroots community development and empowerment projects through the *Youth Bunges*. By incorporating youth into the management of the fund, Yes Youth Can! will promote transparency and accountability, and further youth's leadership development.

- YYC is facilitating the formation of the **National Bunge Association (NBA)** that will bring together youth from around the country. The NBA will also manage the Youth Innovate for Change (Tahidi) Fund and Think Tank

#### Yes Youth Can! Partners

Yes Youth Can! is USAID's largest youth-empowerment program in the world. The implementing partners are:

YYC / Coast: CLUSA International  
YYC / Central: Mercy Corps  
YYC / Nairobi: Inuka Kenya Trust  
YYC / Nyanza: World Vision  
YYC / Rift Valley: Mercy Corps  
YYC / Western: Winrock International  
YYC / National: Mercy Corps